several other States have, suffered a heavy loss due to fast blowing winds alongwith rain, hail storm and frost during the last month;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that above rain and hail storm have caused loss of life, property and livestock;

(d) if so, the details thereof, State-wise and district-wise; and

(e) assistance being provided to farmers by Government to compensate the above loss?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) to (e) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the Sabha.

Procurement and consumption of rice

816. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that in 2005-2006, rice consumption stood at 87.01 million tonnes against an output of 91.7 million tonnes and the demand for rice has been going up at an average of 1 million tonnes each year;

(b) whether it is also a fact that despite all measures, the Ministry's estimates of Kharif rice stood at only 80.15 million tonnes compared to last years' 80.11 million tonnes; and

(c) if so, the steps Government proposes to take to procure more rice from domestic markets, so that it may be available in large quantities?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) On the basis of monthly per capita quantities of consumption reported in the National Sample Survey 61st Round Report on "Household Consumption of Various Goods and Services in India 2004-05", and the population projections given by the Office of the Registrar of India, the consumption of rice in the country during 2005-06 was estimated at 87.01 million tonnes which includes seed, feed and wastage against an output of 91.79 million tonnes. The household demand for rice has been going up by about 1.24 million tonnes each year.

(b) As per the 2nd Advance Estimates released on 07.02.2008, production of Kharif rice during 2007-08 is estimated at 81.52 million tonnes compared to last year's Kharif season production of 80.17 million tonnes.

(c) The Government has taken following steps to maximize procurement of rice in the Kharif Marketing Season (KMS) 2007-08:

(i) To encourage farmers to grow more paddy, the Minimum support Price (MSP) for paddy was fixed at Rs. 645 per quintal (Common Variety) and Rs. 675 per quintal (Grade "A" Variety) for KMS 2007-08 giving an increase of Rs. 65 per quintal over the MSP of KMS 2006-07.

(ii) A bonus of Rs. 100 per quintal over and above the MSP of paddy in KMS 2007-08 had been announced.

(iii) Commission to Societies and Self-Help Groups undertaking procurement of paddy

on behalf of the Food Corporation of India/State Agencies has been allowed at a maximum of 1.5% of MSP.

(iv) Export of non-basmati rice below Minimum Export Price of $500 per metric tonne has been restricted.

(v) A notification requiring furnishing of return to the Secretary, Department of Food of the State Government in case of purchase (by any company or Firm of Individual) of rice beyond 10,000 tonnes and to the Central Government in case of purchase of rice beyond 25,000 tonnes has been issued. The above returns will indicate from where maximum quantities have been purchased. As a result, rice procurement for the Central Pool in KMS 2007-08 is 202.5 lakh tons (upto 3.3.2008) as compared to 193.5 lakh tonnes in the corresponding period last year.

Consultant for PCPIR

817. SHRI KANJIBHAI PATEL: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Central Government has appointed M/s Dalal Mott MacDonal as a consultant for short listing the location for setting up of Petroleum, Chemicals and Petrochemicals Investment Region (PCPIR);

(b) if so, whether Dahej in Gujarat has been selected as one of the most important sites; and

(c) if so, the time period scheduled for setting up of PCPIR at Dahej?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI B. K. HANDIQUE): (a) No Sir. M/s Dalal Mott McDonald are now engaged for facilitating technical scrutiny of the PCPIR project proposals as received from State Governments by the Department of Chemicals and Petrochemicals.

(b) and (c): The State of Gujarat has submitted an application for hosting a PCPIR at Dahej spread over the blocks of Vagra and Bharuch in the district of Bharuch, South Gujarat. No time limit can be fixed for setting up of same.

Prices of Drugs

818. SHRI MAHENDRA MOHAN: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) what measures have been taken by Government to check the prices of drugs through the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) under the Drugs Prices Control Order;

(b) the number of cases where prices rose beyond the permissible limits;

(c) whether the price control has any impact on supply and production of drugs in the country; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI B. K. HANDIQUE): (a) The 74 bulk drugs specified in the first Schedule of the Drugs (Prices Control) Order, 1995 (DPCO, 95) and the formulations based thereon are under price .